

## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 1, 2005

### NETS Feature

#### **Last Chance Opportunity**

Don't miss out on attending the **Michigan NETS Traffic Safety Symposium** taking place on August 17, 2005 and sponsored by the Michigan NETS Advisory Board. The Symposium will take place at Steelcase Town Hall located in Grand Rapids. The Symposium will have nationally recognized speakers present on topics including: Risk Assessment and Negligent Entrustment; Defensive Driving Training Opportunities; Fleet Safety; Automotive Technologies and resources to enable you to implement traffic safety programs in your workplace. Internationally known, Dr. Jim Reese, will present the key note address on learning the necessary skills to overcome the effects of stress. On-line information including a registration form to attend this Symposium is now available at the following link: <http://www.michigan.gov/michnets/0,1607,7-188--120009--,00.html> For additional information please contact Dan Vartanian at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail: [vartanid@michigan.gov](mailto:vartanid@michigan.gov)

#### **Drive the Message Home With NETS Work-Life Traffic Safety Resources**

Employees balancing work and family responsibilities face enormous pressures as they try to manage the conflicting demands of both worlds. Today meeting the demands of work and life means different things to different people, and oftentimes depends on where employees are in their life and career. Your employees are managing childcare, eldercare for aging parents, and in some cases, both. Others may be pursuing personal goals such as continuing their education, engaging in an exercise program, or participating in community service activities. Regardless of how they are spending their time one fact remains clear: America's workforce is struggling to do more with less time....More [http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/080105\\_drivefeat.asp](http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/080105_drivefeat.asp)

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **Event Data Recorders: Small Devices Expected To Make Big Impact**

Standard in airplanes and trains, 'black boxes' have often provided the missing links in crash investigations. Now these devices are making their way into the automobile industry and are expected to have a big impact. Officially called Event Data Recorders (EDRs), these in-vehicle devices capture the critical seconds before and during the crash. They can reveal speed, seat belt use and if and when the air bag was deployed. It is estimated that nearly 40 million vehicles are equipped with EDRs. Yet many drivers do not know that their vehicles are equipped with EDRs and despite the high number of EDR-equipped vehicles, it remains unclear who owns the recorded information. Insurance companies, law enforcement, the federal government, automakers, and drivers all have valid needs for the data. Recently, California became the first state to address data ownership with four other states following suit and eleven others with legislation pending. Read the full article at <http://www.latimes.com/business/custom/cotown/la-tm-blackbox29jul17,1,4798268.story?coll=la-headlines-business-enter>

#### **'ICE' Cell Phone Contacts To Aid Rescue Workers**

Paramedics, police and firefighters often waste valuable time trying to figure out who out who to contact in emergency situations. Enter the cell phone. The cell phone has proven to be an indispensable lifeline to its owner in times of crisis. Now one British paramedic has figured out a way

for the cell phone to assist first responders in making life and death decisions. Cell phone users are being encouraged to input the acronym ICE (in case of emergency) into their cell phones before the names of the people they want to designate as next of kin. The initiative is quickly gaining momentum in the United States. Read the full article at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/17/AR2005071700879.html>

### **New Report Investigates Commercial Motor Vehicle Seat Belt Usage**

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) has released "Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program (CTBSSP) Synthesis 8: Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Safety Belt Usage." The report identifies and documents the motivating factors that influence commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers in deciding whether to wear seat belts. It also offers a review of ergonomic and human engineering factors in the design and use of seat belts in CMVs. View the report at [http://trb.org/publications/ctbssp/ctbssp\\_syn\\_8.pdf](http://trb.org/publications/ctbssp/ctbssp_syn_8.pdf)

### **Volvo Seeks To Test Safety Feature With Alcohol Impaired Test Drivers**

Automaker Volvo has asked the Swedish government for an exemption from the country's strict drinking and driving laws so that its test drivers can test a new safety system that warns fatigued and intoxicated drivers if they are not reacting to danger. Volvo, whose reputation rests on its value for safety, will only allow its intoxicated drivers to take the wheel on its test tracks. If the request is granted, it would mark the first exception to Sweden's alcohol impaired driving laws, which are among the toughest in the world. For more information visit <http://www.forbes.com/associatedpress/feeds/ap/2005/07/20/ap2148775.html>

### **Company Seeks To Equip Vehicles With 'Electronic Rumble Strips'**

A company specializing in in-vehicle technologies is launching what it calls "electronic rumble strips." The technology is another version of the emerging Lane Departure Warning system. The system incorporates a camera tucked up behind the rearview mirror and relies on the company's "smart" software to detect lane departure. The audio sensor is activated before the vehicle starts to move out of its lane. According to the creator, traditional rumble strips alongside highways have been proven to reduce fatalities by 30 to 50 percent that costs the US economy approximately \$80 billion each year. Read the full article at [http://www.boston.com/cars/articles/2005/07/17/your\\_own\\_electronic\\_rumble\\_strip/](http://www.boston.com/cars/articles/2005/07/17/your_own_electronic_rumble_strip/)

### **Small Cars Making A Big Comeback**

Compact cars are expected to make a comeback for automakers, according to a recent report by "The Wall Street Journal." After pushing SUVs in the past few years, the industry is seeing a demand for smaller, fuel-efficient cars. In the past consumers have been wary of smaller vehicles due to safety reasons, but improved safety technology and high fuel prices are making them attractive to consumers again.

### **Billboard Displays Number Of Crashes To Encourage Safe Driving**

Officials in Charlotte, North Carolina hope that a new billboard that tracks and displays the number of crashes that occurred on that particular stretch of roadway will encourage motorists to drive more carefully. The billboard includes an electronic scoreboard indicating the total number of crashes to date. The number has since reached more than 11,800. Read the full article at [http://www.news14charlotte.com/content/local\\_news/?AC=&ArID=98190&SecID=2](http://www.news14charlotte.com/content/local_news/?AC=&ArID=98190&SecID=2)

### **New Jersey Lawmaker Seeks To Ban Smoking Behind The Wheel**

New legislation in New Jersey seeks to ban smoking while driving. Offenders would face a fine of up to \$250. The Assemblyman introducing the proposed ban, whose father died of emphysema, cites a AAA-sponsored survey on driver distractions that found 32,000 crashes linked to distraction; 1 percent

of which was caused by smoking behind the wheel. While similar laws in the United States seek to ban smoking while children are in the car, none have gone so far as to outlaw it altogether. Read the full article at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8697348/>

### **'Smart Phones' Navigate Drivers Away From Clogged Roadways**

In the age of rising fuel and toll prices, increasing congestion, and on-time deliveries, one New Jersey-based company is hoping to take the guesswork out of dodging clogged roadways. ALK Technologies Inc. has developed "smart phones," small cell phones equipped with tiny computers that use signals from 24 orbiting global positioning system (GPS) satellites to detect the location of the phone. This data is then sent over the phone's wireless data link to computers where it is analyzed, along with the data from thousands of other smart phones, to determine the traffic velocity on roadways. The traffic information is then sent to smart phone users so they can alter their routes. Gaining popularity among commercial users in Europe, the technology is an expensive investment at \$600 per phone. The creators are hoping to sell the data gathered from smart phones to US wireless providers. Read the full article at <http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/business/12207014.htm>

### **Company Turns Vehicles Into Mobile Advertisements**

Ohio-based Advertising Vehicles is turning commercial vehicles into moving billboards. The company sells vinyl "wraps" that can turn cars, vans, and trucks into mobile advertisements. Now grossing more than \$2 million in sales, they have clients in Florida and California. The average wrap costs \$2,500 per vehicle and according to one study can sometimes make 30,000 impressions daily. For information visit <http://www.advertisingvehicles.com/avsite/>

### **Lawmakers Debate Need For More Wireless Signals For First Responders**

The need for more public safety spectrum was the subject of two Senate Commerce Committee hearings recently. Both hearings were devoted to determining the best way to complete the transition from analog to digital television in order to free up spectrum for first responders. The hearings follow the recent London attacks where Scotland Yard was forced to borrow spectrum from a private company. While freeing up spectrum is universally accepted, the process will significantly change the way Americans receive television signals. Still, the National Association of Broadcasters stated that it would support a hard deadline in 2008 or 2009 with no exceptions. Read the full article at [http://www.nlc.org/Newsroom/Nation\\_s\\_Cities\\_Weekly/Weekly\\_NCW/2005/07/18/5760.cfm](http://www.nlc.org/Newsroom/Nation_s_Cities_Weekly/Weekly_NCW/2005/07/18/5760.cfm)

## **News from USDOT**

### **NHTSA Chief To Step Down**

Jeffrey Runge, the administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is stepping down from his post next month to take the top medical post at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Runge has held the nation's chief regulator of vehicle safety position since August 2001. He is credited with contributing to the lowest highway death rate and highest rate of seat belt use in history.

### **NHTSA Examines Traffic Crashes As A Leading Cause Of Death In 2002**

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) has released a new report examining the status of motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of death in the United States in 2002. View the full report at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2005/809843.pdf>

### **New Report Outlines Findings Of 2003 Motor Vehicle Safety Survey**

NHTSA recently released a report examining the findings of its 2003 Motor Vehicle Occupant Safety Survey. According to the report's findings and outlined in Volume 3, the percentage of drivers with airbags in their primary vehicles has continued to increase with 77 percent having airbags in 2003

compared to 67 percent in 2000. View Volume 3 of the report at [http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/2003MVOP\\_Survey-vol3/images/2003MVOSSVol3.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/2003MVOP_Survey-vol3/images/2003MVOSSVol3.pdf) Volume 4 of the report outlines crash injuries and emergency medical services. It found that nearly three in 10 persons aged 16 and older reported having been injured in a crash in which they required medical attention; 16 percent of these injuries were severe enough to prevent them from performing everyday activities for at least a week. The study also found that persons not wearing their seat belts were twice as likely to be hospitalized from crash-related injuries. View Volume 4 of the report at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/2003MVOSSVol4/images/1779EMS.pdf>

### **Work-Life:**

#### **Car Dealers To Promote Child Passenger Safety**

The National Automobile Dealers Association has announced September as Child Passenger Safety Month. In recognition of its "Boost for Safety" campaign, which was developed in partnership with the NHTSA, franchised car dealers around the country will host child safety seat inspections at their respective dealerships. For more information visit [www.nada.org/boostforsafety](http://www.nada.org/boostforsafety)

#### **Study: Washington, DC Deadliest Area For Teen Drivers**

Washington, DC is considered the deadliest location for the nation's young drivers, according to a new study by End Needless Death on Our Roadways (END) and the National Safety Council. The study ranked the states and the District of Columbia according to fatality rates among drivers ages 16 to 20. Researchers determined that approximately 127 fatalities occur for every 100,000 young motorists in the District. Read the full article at [http://money.cnn.com/2005/07/19/Autos/teen\\_drivers/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2005/07/19/Autos/teen_drivers/index.htm)

#### **Police In Maine Launch New Program To Reduce Teen Driving Deaths**

Law enforcement officials in Maine are banding together to reduce fatal teen motor vehicle crashes with the launch of SAFEGuard—a statewide program that notifies parents when their teen driver has been stopped for traffic infractions. The slogan for the campaign is "Your parents will be the first to know." The new program is considered to be the first of its kind in the country, and is expected to reduce Maine's high teen death rate, which at a per capita rate is higher than any other state. From 1999 to 2003, 152 teens were killed on Maine's roads. Read the full article at <http://www.bangornews.com/news/templates/?a=116467>

#### **Cal State University System Targets Drinking And Driving**

A combination of law enforcement and peer education is being heralded as reducing alcohol abuse and drinking and driving throughout the California State University system, according to recent reports. While the prevention strategies varied from campus to campus, all involved increased enforcement and "social norm" marketing. One of the system's most effective initiatives involved the California Office of Traffic Safety, which allocated \$750,000 over eight campuses to recruit peer educators and help law enforcement identify potentially dangerous situations. Read the full article at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/07/26/drinking>

### **International Traffic Safety News:**

#### **Survey: UK Drivers Want More Warning About Speed Cameras**

A new survey by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) revealed that when it comes to speed cameras, drivers want advanced warnings. According to the survey results, nearly nine out of 10 drivers say every roadside camera should include a sign that advises motorists of the speed limit. More than eight out of 10 drivers want vehicle-activated signs placed ahead of cameras to provide an early reminder. First introduced in London in 1992, there are now more than 6,000 fixed and mobile



camera sites across Great Britain. Read the release at  
[http://www.iam.org.uk/Pressroom/News\\_Releases/2005/nr0512.pdf](http://www.iam.org.uk/Pressroom/News_Releases/2005/nr0512.pdf)

### **UK Offers Cash Rewards To Safe Drivers**

Company drivers of a security firm in the UK are finding that safe driving pays. The firm is rewarding its safe drivers with gift vouchers up to £100 as part of a major incentive scheme. The vouchers start at £25 and are given to those employees who have not been involved in any crashes and those who meet or better the targeted miles per gallon of their vehicles. Meeting the vehicle's miles per gallon recommendation can reduce fuel costs and proves that drivers are operating their vehicle safely—avoiding abrupt braking and harsh acceleration.

### **Roadway Signs Don't Lead The Way For UK Motorists**

A new survey has revealed that the average driver in the UK is unable to identify one third of all road signs. The survey was based on the results of 1,660 drivers and used 12 different, everyday road signs.

### **Survey: Music Can Improve Driver Concentration**

A new survey in the UK has found that music and its different genres can influence driving behaviors. The survey included the responses from 1,780 drivers in England, Wales, and Scotland. Drivers who listened to easy listening, classical, and indie/rock tended to be among the safest drivers, or those with four or more crash-free years. The survey also found 24 of the respondents indicated that music improved their concentration. Sixty-three percent of safe drivers said that the music they listened to while driving soothed them and made them feel calmer and more relaxed behind the wheel. Read the full article at

[http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=ZU1815419Q&news\\_headline=music\\_in\\_the\\_car\\_can\\_help\\_driver\\_alertness](http://www.lse.co.uk/ShowStory.asp?story=ZU1815419Q&news_headline=music_in_the_car_can_help_driver_alertness)

### **Local Municipalities In Canada To Sell Highway Ads**

Government officials in Alberta Canada have agreed to let local municipalities sell billboard space on major highways. Currently, highway ads can only be posted on private property. Transportation officials dismissed driver distraction concerns, and said that the move could put an end to some of the unattractive signs on the highways. Meanwhile, critics argue that road signs in their very nature are unsightly and clutter the highway. Read the full article at

<http://calgary.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=ca-billboards20050726>

### **Employees Seek Duplicate Licenses To Hide Violations**

New reports out of the UK indicate that employee drivers are using up to three driving licenses to hide prosecutions and convictions from their employers. According to some experts, the fraudulent duplicate licenses are being fueled by the growing use of speed cameras. Employees are being tempted to lie to employers in fear that a conviction could cost them their jobs.